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ABSTRACT

Because a change in child care center directors is potentially so disruptive to both staff and children, factors which inhibit a smooth transition of leadership should be identified and, where possible, solutions proposed. Therefore, this paper (1) briefly describes (through five case studies) different managerial successions in child care centers and their effect on both the existing staff members and the new manager, (2) identifies pertinent theories to provide perspective on, and increased understanding of, the case study events presented, and (3) makes recommendations for preventing some of the typical problems encountered. In order to determine existing practices and perceptions about succession, a number of interviews were conducted with six local program administrators and 15 of their staff members in three Northern California counties. Case study materials presented in Section I were constructed from the interview data. In Section II, the importance of expectations, behaviors of group members, ceremony, communication networks, and subtle aspects of individual and group responses to change are discussed. Several detailed and specific recommendations for making the managerial succession process in child care centers less disruptive to members of the existing work group are presented in Section III. Interview schedules and related materials are appended. (Author/RH)

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MANAGERIAL SUCCESSION IN CHILD CARE CENTERS

by

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MANAGERIAL SUCCESSION IN CHILD CARE CENTERS

> The effect of changing personnel by adding, removing, or replacing individuals is a ... [situation in which] ... the typical result is a period of role instability and struggle that surprises and frustrates the members. People often do not understand what is going on and why it must go on. . . [1]
>
> Ernest G. Bormann and Nancy C. Bormann

I. Statement of the Study

A high rate of staff turnover --- due mostly to low pay, low status of the profession, or worker "burnout" --- is a problem experienced by large numbers of child care programs.[2] Changes in personnel are not confined to lower-level jobs alone but occur frequently at the top managerial level of a center, the position of site director. Since child care programs are typically small organizations of people who must work very closely together in order to carry out the daily care and supervision of the children and since their child care "mission" is only broadly defined

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1. Ernest G. Bormann and Nancy C. Bormann, Effective Small Group Communication, p. 108.

2. In the simplest terms, child care, or child development, programs provide care and supervision to children, ranging in age from infancy through fourteen years, for a portion of the day while their parents work, participate in training programs, or seek employment. Most programs are comprehensive, designed to meet the educational, health and nutritional and social service needs of each individual child and family. Programs may be operated under public or private sector sponsors.

by regulating authorities, a change in leadership can have a profound effect on the existing work group members and on the program offered children and families.

While a number of studies of organizations (e.g., factories, baseball teams, the military) have indicated that management succession -- the movement of a manager into and out of the organization or work group -- is disruptive, child care administration literature is virtually silent on the topic. Directors may discover too late that they were totally unprepared for "following someone else's act" --- for planning their own entry into the existing work group, for finding out about the group's history and accustomed ways of doing things, and for realistically anticipating staff responses to the change of directors --- in short, for planning and effecting as smooth a transition as possible for themselves and for their staff members.

Because a change in child care center directors is potentially so disruptive to both staff and children, factors which inhibit a smooth transition of leadership should be identified and where possible, solutions proposed. Therefore, this paper will

(1) Briefly describe a number of managerial successions in child care centers and their effect on both the existing staff members and the new manager

(2) Identify pertinent theories to provide perspective on, and increased understanding of, the case study events presented

(3) Make recommendations for preventing some of the typical problems encountered.

II. Examples: Management Succession in Child Care Centers

The manner in which the replacement of a director is announced and the actual transition implemented and their ultimate effect on existing staff members varies considerably from program to program. In order to determine existing practices and perceptions about succession, a number of interviews were conducted with local program administrators and their staff members.[1] Directors were questioned about such areas as the reason for the replacement, their prior knowledge of the center and staff, role perception, expectations regarding staff reactions and changes, entry into the group, activities during the initial days and weeks, behaviors and attitudes encountered, and changes attempted and actually effected. Selected staff members at each site were questioned regarding their perceptions of the role of the director, the manner in which the change of directors was announced and implemented, their feelings (fears and hopes) about the

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1. Information for case studies was obtained through personal interviews with child care program administrators and several staff members at each site. Due to time and fuel constraints, only programs located in three Northern California counties were studied, but an effort was made to include a representative cross-section of public and private sector programs, program types, and program sizes. Six directors, succeeding other directors within one to twelve months of the interview, participated; in addition, one director of eleven years recalled her experiences. All but one director came to their positions from other programs; one was previously a teacher at the same center for many years. Staff members participated on a volunteer basis during work hours with no loss of pay. A total of fifteen staff interviews was conducted--three of them at a center where the current director is not contemplating leaving (these were asked a short series of hypothetical questions only). All interviewees were advised that the content was confidential and would not be shared with the site director or identified to other child care programs in the community. The Director Interview Schedule is attached as Appendix A; Staff Interview Schedule as Appendix B; and Appendix C presents the list of hypothetical questions.

Although only twenty-two interviews were conducted, a number of similar responses and observations occur, and it seems one may assume that similar experiences and examples would be encountered in other child care centers.

change, their first meeting with the new director, the director's words and actions during the initial period and the effect on the interviewee and/or other staff members, contrasts in climate under the old and new directors, and any changes perceived since the arrival of the new director.

Highlights of a number of management successions are provided in the following case studies:

Situation A A large private child care center was sold suddenly on a Thursday night. On Friday morning the new owners arrived at the center to announce the sale to both the old director and the staff. Although no staff changes were made at that time, the new owners introduced a woman with them as a "consultant to help with the educational program;" no additional discussion of the consultant's background or role in relation to the old director or staff was held at the time (e.g., authority to impose changes, source of the consultant's presumed expertise, etc.). The consultant had no prior knowledge of the center or staff members before that morning.

During the next two weeks the consultant was on site frequently, observing the program, making suggestions about equipment, and talking to the staff. On a weekend about two weeks after the sale, the new owner decided to terminate the old director due to differences of opinion about finances.[2] On Monday an announcement was made to staff that the consultant would be the new director for the center.

One of the first acts of the new director was to hold a staff meeting

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2. During the first days after the purchase, the new owner, who had had no previous experience with nursery schools, discovered that the business was in very poor financial condition with checks bouncing and delinquent parent fees. Furthermore, the center had not acquired the State-required license to operate a child care facility.

during which she shared her background in child care (extensive), reassured employees about their jobs, and stated some basic immediate goals for the program in terms of changes and improvements needed. A few rules (e.g., standards of professional dress, no spanking children) were established. The staff members were asked to discuss and define broad program goals for the center over a period of several weeks.

Because of the lack of clarity from the new owner about her authority and role during the first weeks, the new director felt she was "wishy-washy" in dealing with staff and making demands on them at first. She was afraid they might quit en masse and leave her with no one to care for the children; yet, she maintained a strong stance in those areas she felt were vital to meeting children's needs (e.g., no spanking). Other things she "let slide," realizing that she "couldn't conquer all things at once."

Describing initial staff reactions and behaviors toward her, the new director observed that "they questioned every detail. . . it almost didn't matter what it was, they just rejected it because I said it. . . they made it pretty obvious they did not like the changeover because they weren't included in it. . ."[3] The manner in which the sale was handled and announced was brought up over and over and the new director blamed for it. Those staff members interviewed also cited numerous incidences of testing behavior and challenges to the director's authority and knowledge of child development both from individuals and the group as a whole. One noted she was being asked to work with children in a way entirely new to her and she was confused and questioned the new manager a great deal; she also admitted she

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3. Director C, Interview, November 1979.

was afraid she would not be able to change.[4]

The director continued to concentrate on making the staff feel good about themselves and kept stressing the necessity for working together and for "putting the past behind us." Finally, after about five or six weeks, the staff seemed to have "burnt out their hostilities: . . and were ready to go on."[5] As the tension level lessened, the director noted a change in her own attitude ---"when they became less hostile and suspicious, I became more sensitive to their needs. At the beginning, I was almost writing their needs off . . ." but as one staff member, candid about the staff's initial resistance, observed, "she [i.e., the director] mellowed it out."[6]

Changes which have taken place are: improved child-staff ratio, institution of weekly staff meetings, purchase of new equipment and materials for the children, small pay raises, and enforcement of the "no spanking" rule. Although changes happened rapidly, they are perceived as positive ones by the employees.

All staff members interviewed described the atmosphere under the old director as very tense, unorganized, and lacking a clear sense of direction; the atmosphere was relaxed and things went smoothly primarily when the director was not on the premises. The old director had no formal training

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4. Staff Interview C2, November 1979.
5. One teacher, who has greater education and experience and who had been on the staff only a month before the arrival of the new director, characterized herself as an "outsider" in relation to other staff members and was contemplating resigning. She stated that although she was initially unsure about the new director, she was the first to "change her mind" about the new director although she did not really verbalize her opinion to the others because she "didn't need more trouble [e.g., with co-workers]." Staff Interview C1, November 1979.
6. Staff Interview C2, November 1979.

and no prior experience in early childhood education or administration and was perceived as ignoring problems basic to classroom operation.

Staff members describe the climate under the new director as "more relaxed," "more comfortable," and "more secure." They seem to feel that staff members are working better together and also cite improved feelings of self-worth as teachers of young children and feel good about "knowing where they stand."

Situation B The owner-director of a private child care center with an excellent reputation in the community decided to retire and sell her school after operating it fifteen years. After receiving several offers which she rejected, she finally agreed to sell the school to a young woman, credentialled as a public school teacher but new to the child care field. In order to familiarize herself with the business and classroom routines, the new owner-director arranged to work with the old director on a regular basis for seven weeks prior to her official assumption of ownership.

The old director held a meeting and introduced the new owner, expressing the belief that the new owner would be good for the school and continue it in its reputation as a quality school. Also, at that time the director-to-be shared information about her background and experience, stated she wanted to learn from the staff, and was looking forward to working with them.

The new owner knew only that the school was considered a good one by parents but had no prior knowledge of the staff or program details until the time spent at the center during the seven-week transition period. During that period she was able to observe activities and routines, form

opinions about the role the outgoing director played and her manner of communicating with staff, and what the duties of each staff person were. She got to know the staff members. She learned the history of the center and the educational philosophy from the old owner; no information was asked or provided about personnel policies or possible staff concerns such as wages or sick leave. The new director also formed opinions about needed changes (e.g., more lesson planning, specific lists of duties/ job descriptions, defined goals for activities) and decided to implement them over a period of several months rather than all at once.

The one staff member available for interview described the climate under the new director as almost the same and identified only the new director's request for increased lesson planning as a change. Staff seems to have input and perceives the change as a smooth one. There was no indication by the staff member that there was any staff resistance to the new director; nor did the director speak of any.[7]

Situation C The director of an established school district-sponsored child care center took a six-month maternity leave of absence; during her absence a new director was hired on a temporary basis. At her own request, the new director worked only part time at the center so that she could

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7. Interestingly, the new owner-director stated that she felt confident upon assuming her duties but for a period of about two months felt she was "putting out fires" and trying to do everything. She was afraid to do things though, fearing the former owner "might not like it" or might "do it differently." She was afraid of making a mistake. Finally, she told her staff, "I am not like X. I can't be, and I am going to do what I want to do. Tell me if it's not going the way you want. . ." She identified this point as a sort of epiphany in beginning to feel good about her role as director although none of the staff interviewed singled out the same event. Director A, Interview, November 1979.

work at another (more permanent) early childhood education job outside the school district.

Before assuming her duties, the new director knew only a little about the center (information gleaned from a friend whose child attended the center) and knew nothing about the staff or absent director. Based on the type of questions she was asked during her interview, she surmised that there was considerable staff conflict. The staff was not told anything about her prior to her arrival at the center when she was brought into most of the classrooms and introduced briefly by the departing director. The old director then spent about three days with her replacement before leaving, most of that time in going over paperwork in the office.

As a temporary director, the new manager felt it would be "unfair to implement change that was not the absent director's choice"[8] and her intent was only to "maintain the status quo." One staff member observed that "as temporary director, she didn't exactly say, but she didn't seem to want to be here. . ."[9]

At the end of the six-month period, the absent director decided not to return and the temporary director applied for and was hired for the permanent position. The now-permanent director immediately wrote an open letter to staff members stating, in effect, that what she had done before was a caretaking job and that her reactions and responses to problems and situations would be different in the future. In addition, a few self-observations about her style and personality were listed and an invitation issued to share any concerns with her. Also at that time, the program had

8. Director D; Interview, November 1979.
9. Staff Interview D2, November 1979.

a two-week break and the teachers and director had a five-day in-service training session together before the fall re-opening of the center. For the first time, the new director and her staff shared their expectations about the role of the director and teachers. Sharp contrasts were noted in a number of areas and both teachers and director realized for the first time that the school district administration had greatly changed the role of the center director in the previous six-month period, requiring much more "office time" from the center manager.

As permanent director, the manager described a change in her thinking as "I am going to be here, it's fair to press now --about behavior and about program, specifically."[10] Staff members interviewed did indeed note a change in her behavior, citing that explanations are clearer, physical improvements have been made in the center, and a long-talked about change in job description for teacher aide positions was finally presented to and approved by the district administration. A number of these changes required taking strong stances with the sponsoring school district. The director has, in the words of one teacher, "committed herself to solving some problems. . ."[11]

There continue to be some differences between the director's and the staff's expectations about the director's role, and both staff interviewees noted a sharp contrast between the styles of the two directors. The old director was described as a "reassuring presence" to staff in times of problems and a "consistent communicator," giving information at staff meetings and regular feedback on individual work performance; she was frequently

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10. Director D, op. cit.
11. Staff Interview D1, November 1979.

in the classroom model teaching and observing. In contrast, her new successor is characterized as a less direct and less frequent communicator in areas of interest to the staff (e.g., work performance) and less consultative in decisionmaking; her manner is "more administrator-y" than personal.

The director has noted no overt staff resistance to her either during the temporary period or during the current transition. Staff members themselves could not pinpoint any such behaviors other than feelings of anger at not getting answers or surprise at a situation responded to differently than the previous director would have. Both expressed respect for the director's willingness to stand up to the school district when needed and feel that she "really cares" about the children and program.

Situation D An infant care program sponsored by a school district had been in operation only one year before its director, who had originally accepted the job "for two years at the most" (this was known to the staff), decided to return to a classroom teaching position at another school. One teacher in the program, trained at a prestigious private college known for its work in training infant care specialists, applied for the position. It had been assumed by the staff and implied by both the departing director and the school site principal that this teacher would eventually become the second director for the program. However, a person with many years of experience in the child care field was selected instead.

The old director had been gone for a week when school district officials made their selection and asked the new director to report to the center at noon the following day. The site principal took her to the center's scheduled staff meeting to introduce her and to make the district's selection public

for the first time. The staff member applicant had not yet been told of the district's decision not to hire her and left the meeting visibly upset. Prior to that time, the new director assumed (and had, in fact, asked) that the staff had already been informed of the choice.

At that same first staff meeting, based on a three-hour visit she had made prior to her interview and also on "intimated expectations" and impressions given during the interview that the district administration "wanted the program pulled together"[12] and was concerned about record-keeping and accountability, the new director spoke generally about the changes she wanted to make. She also presented a new infant activity-planning card and requested each staff member to use it daily in planning for the babies. Staff were very quiet during the meeting.

During her first days the new manager talked with the disappointed applicant about her feelings and the need to work together. The staff person has great insight into and understanding of her own feelings of hurt and resentment and has not consciously challenged the new director in any way.

In addition, during her first week, the director asked each staff member to write down three things the center needed; these were finally obtained after several reminders. Her priorities were to be established from reading their responses although no feedback had yet been given to the staff at the time of the interviews.

The new director stated that she has had difficulty in obtaining the history and policies of the organization. The district did not pro-

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12. Director F, Interview, December 1979.

vide much orientation and the wrong State program guidelines were given to her. No district administrator trained her on required record-keeping and forms, but a secretary at another site was designated to answer her telephoned questions. The director lamented, "They want me to be autonomous, but they want me to know the specifics by osmosis." The director discovered that paperwork and State-required program records were far in arrears and resents district administration requiring her to do "catch-up" and sign off on things for a period of time when she was not even employed by the program. Although she has been able to implement regular staff meetings, the necessity to spend time on paperwork has diverted her from the implementation of her goals (e.g., changes in the environment, changes in types of activities offered the babies).

The director feels now that the staff is "pretty friendly," although at the end of her first month she feels there is still some testing of her. No staff members have left the center, yet both interviewees stated that they are seeking other work.[13] They point to much meaningless paperwork (i.e., the required activity planning card), a lack of "positive strokes" and not feeling good about their work, and changes which seem to be imposed by the new director without a sufficient understanding of the staff's reasons for doing things in certain ways and with little staff input. "We feel discounted and as if everything we did in the past year was wrong."[14]

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13. One teacher observed that there was conflict between one or two of the staff members before; however, with the advent of the new director, the conflict has diminished and all of the staff is "much closer now." Staff Interview F1, December 1979.

14. Staff Interview F2, December 1979.

Situation E A nursery school on a college campus went through a great deal of funding turmoil in the wake of Proposition 13 last year and the ensuing uncertainty of legislative decisions regarding child care funding. At the end of the school year, the director left the program to return to classroom teaching elsewhere in the city. The position was vacant for approximately two and one-half months, during the summer when the program was not actually in operation but also extending into the fall staff preparation period. A "head teacher" who had been with the program almost five years and who had minimal college background served as a sort of curriculum leader and supervisor to the other teaching staff members; she was asked by the college administration to fill in during the interim to enroll children and handle the paperwork necessary to open the program for the fall semester. The head teacher also went to the administration and asked to serve on the interview committee for the new director to ensure that "a person with the right background in child care" would be hired.[15] Her request was granted.

After the program opened for the fall, the new director was selected. The administration called her and asked her to report to the center; no one accompanied her there --rather, she walked in alone and was introduced by the head teacher to individual staff memebrs as they worked with the children. The director noted during her interview that the staff "did not seem very interested in her at the time."[16]

During her first weeks, the new manager spent much of her time in the office, familiarizing herself with the materials and re-organizing it.

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15. Staff Interview E2, November 1979.
16. Interview, Director E, November 1979.

During the interview the head teacher expressed concerns about not being included in decisions to discard numerous papers from the files. Now, she doesn't know where things are in the office but also admitted she has not asked to be shown.[17] When the director removed a couch from the small office-staff area in order to provide more space for herself, the head teacher said that others needed a place to get away from the children's demands while on breaks and moved it back into the office; the director did not object.

The head teacher served as the director's primary source of information about program history and staff feelings. The head teacher explained that she viewed her role as a "guide to the new director" and frequently said to her, "X, the previous director, did it this way." The head teacher holds meetings with the other teaching staff members and communicates the director's messages. The director explained that because of the way the role has been defined in the past, she does not feel that she can either run the meeting or set its agenda. In addition, she seems to feel the need to check with the head teacher before attending the daily staff meetings.

After several weeks, the new director held a meeting in order to describe to staff where she thought changes needed to be made (e.g., a change in the classroom program structure, expanded hours of operation in order to balance the budget and better meet parents' needs, seeking funds

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17. Staff Interview F2. (Note: Although it is unusual for staff members to be much concerned about the administrator's files, the teacher interviewee expressed conern similar to the head teacher's ---"maybe she's throwing out something we need." One surmises that this is evidence of the head teacher's influence on staff thinking.

to serve infants in order to expand the center's funding base).[18] Greeted by negative verbal responses about why the changes cannot be effected, she has "backed off" and begun to lay more groundwork for the changes; she is "re-prioritizing" and re-evaluating her timetable for achieving the changes by the next semester. She described her disappointment at not being able to do the "neat things" she expected to do upon accepting the position.

Asked to describe the staff attitudes, the director characterized them as disinterested at first and then resistant to change.[19] When she asked questions about why things were done in certain ways, defensiveness was frequently encountered. Soon after she announced expected changes at the staff meeting, staff members[20] met at the home of the old director to determine ways to "get rid of her." A month has passed since she assumed the directorship and the staff is questioning her less, although she and the head teacher still "see everything differently." The director interprets staff reactions primarily as a reaction to last year's funding battles and ensuing "staff burnout." "It will just take time for them to get to trust me."

Although she stated she doesn't yet know the director very well, the one teacher interviewed expressed positive feelings about the new director; she pointed to staff meetings that now have a more specific focus, the director listens and seeks staff input, and the center has goals. The

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18. During the interview, the Director stated that the financial situations may require the eventual elmination of the head teacher position -a position too costly for a center of this size. Currently, the formal job description is very similar to that of the other teachers although there is a pay differential.

19. Her remarks specifically excluded a teacher she hired after becoming director; the new arrival and the new director have a visibly easy and warm relationship.

20. It was impossible to tell based on the limited interviews how many staff members were actually involved in these meetings.

Head teacher, on the other hand, feels that there are "a lot of things the new director needs to make decisions about " and identified no changes that have taken place since the new director's arrival. The teacher interviewee believes that some of the staff had been "over-reacting" because there was a new director; one person in particular was "testing and seeking allies." She noted there is less of that kind of behavior now.

III. Observations and Related Theory

Reflection on the experiences of these child care directors and staff members during periods of management succession supports many of our theoretical learnings about organizations and human behavior. Key issues in the successions and related theory are summarized in this section.

Expectations Roosevelt Thomas writes that "both parties [i.e., the employees and the manager or organization] bring to the [work] relationship a set of expectations of what each will give and receive ... . when each enters [the relationship] it tacitly accepts the expectations of the other."[1] The set of the employee's and the organization's mutual beliefs he defines as the basis of the "psychological contract."

Although they varied from program to program, each of the interviewees ---director or staff member ---was able to state quite explicitly what the director of a center should do. The director's beliefs influenced, to a great extent, how her first days were spent, and the staff, in turn, judged the new director's actions in relation to their expectations about what the director should be doing.[2]

Thomas points out that if the expectations of either party are not fulfilled the parties view the contract as having been "violated." Thomas' theory aptly describes the feelings expressed by a number of interviewees.

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1. Roosevelt Thomas, "Managing the Psychological Contract," in Organizational Behavior and Administration: Cases and Readings, Lawrence, Barnes, and Lorsch, editors, p. 466.

2. Directors had perceptions about what their supervisors expected of them; most often these were gained on the basis of the employment interview rather than from any explicit administration statement.

In several instances a conflict in expectations was evident and created tension during the transitional period. For example, in Situation A, staff members expected stable employment from the owner and the sale of the school violated the "psychological contract." In Situation C, staff members expected the director to share information with them at staff meetings and to serve as a model for teaching children; the director (and the school district administration, as was discovered) held a much different view of the duties. Finally, in Situation D, the staff expected a co-worker to assume the director's position and when that did not occur, many felt that a trust had been violated. In addition, the staff expected much positive reinforcement from the director about their achievements of the past year which was not forthcoming. The psychological contract was broken and several were searching for other jobs.

In a study of leadership change, Robert Guest observed that "stability can be achieved only when those in different positions hold reciprocal expectations toward one another."[3] In the cases presented here it was generally assumed by the new directors that the expectations of existing staff members were compatible with theirs; consequently, explicit sharing of goals and objectives for program and discussion of expectations did not occur (or if they did, were held only after a considerable period of time had elapsed as in Situation C). In Situation B, staff and director shared similar expectations and the succession was almost conflict-free. However, in instances where expectations were quite different, conflict

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3. Robert H. Guest, Organizational Change: The Effect of Successful Leadership, p. 144. See also, Bormann and Bormann, op. cit., pp. 114-115.

generally erupted. Thomas does suggest that in cases where the expectations of employee and employer do not match, the psychological contract may either be renegotiated or "remain in an alienated state." When expectations regarding role were shared among director and staff members, as in Situation C, there were many revelations and surprises about the differences and the increased understanding that resulted subsequently helped to reduce tensions. No such discussion or "renegotiation" regarding differing expectations occurred in Situation D and the staff and director remain in "an alienated state."

Behaviors of Group Members "Leaders," observe Bormann and Bormann, "cannot be imposed on the group. The leader must earn the right to lead even if he has been appointed formal leader."[4]

The new managers in these cases do have the formal criteria for center leadership -- position, authority, salary---and yet, the behaviors encountered by most of them and also the feelings described by staff members do not demonstrate immediate and unqualified acceptance.[5] That the new director was selected and deemed qualified by some higher-up administrative authority was not enough in most cases, for all staff members wanted to know a great deal about the new manager's experience in child care. A variety of physical and verbal actions were exhibited and interpreted as challenges to the new manager's authority (e.g., moving the couch back into the office

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4. Bormann and Bormann, op. cit., p. 121.
5. Interestingly, although one author makes a good case for the transition of managers as a sort of "honeymoon period during which the incumbent is almost exempt from criticism and his authority is almost unresisted...," none of the directors in these child care centers experienced such an interlude. Theodore Caplow, How to Run Any Organization: A Manual of Practical Sociology, pp. 14-15.

area), testing limits (e.g., presenting lists of demands and win-lose situations), not implementing orders (e..g, the lesson plan cards), showing disapproval of new ideas(both verbally and through body language), etc. Frequent expressions of "the old director would have done it this way" met many directors.[6] Staff members would gather and discuss the new supervisor among themselves in hushed tones, checking to see, " is ft just me or do others see her [the new director] in the same way?"[7] The director's comments regarding her staff's attitudes in Situation A sharply underscore Sayles' and Strauss' analysis that a new supervisor's "subordinates may resent him as an outsider and prepare themselves to reject everything he does."[8]

Sayles and Strauss further comment that "group members may draw together when they are threatened by a common danger. . . the speed with which long-standing feuds are healed . . . is sometimes wondrous."[9] The emotional period of succession in Situation D, indeed, resulted in the coming together of three previously alienated staff members against "the common danger," the new director brought in from outside the program.

While such behaviors often prove traumatic for the successor, they seem a natural accompaniment (although exhibited in varying degrees) to managerial succession and do subside after a time. Observed one teacher

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6. A comment of Alvin Gouldner's in his study of managerial succession in a manufacturing plant does put this type of employee comment in some perspective. He observes that ". . . one may suspect that many a past plant manager is, to some extent idealized by the workers, even if disliked while present . . ." Alvin W. Gouldner, Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy, p. 79.
7. Staff Interview C2, November 1979.
8. Leonard R. Sayles and George Strauss, Human Behavior in Organizations, p. 320.
9. Ibid., p. 104.

of the furtive conversations discussing each of the new director's actions which would hurriedly stop when the new director entered the room, "there probably will come a time when we don't need that kind of support from one another."[10] Sayles and Strauss speak of this as a "trial period. .. in which the newcomer has to prove himself,"[11] and Edgar Schein views the testing, challenging, etc., as a necessary part of a group getting to know each other. He writes, ". . . it represents an important sorting out, getting acquainted, and coming to terms with each other. . ."[12]

The Role of Ceremony Sayles and Strauss write

> Ceremonies are particularly important in time of change. . . . they help symbolize friendship and unity. . . by involving ourselves in the formalized rites of the ceremony, we protect ourselves from some of the fears and pains of moving from one stage of life to another. The heightened emotional atmosphere helps prepare individuals for major changes in their relations with others. . . we have learned to expect really important changes to occur in this way . . .[13]

Guest suggests that one of the factors contributing to a successful managerial succession in a gypsum plant was the ceremony (e.g., formal dinner during which the company vice-president introduced the new manager to the work group, speeches focusing on the past accomplishments of the company and, the expectation of continuing worker loyalty stressed) surrounding the arrival of the new manager.[14]

In only one of the case studies did any kind of ceremony accompany the arrival of the new director. The old owner-director in Situation B held a

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10. Staff Interview F2, November 1979.
11. Sayles and Strauss, op.cit., p. 101.
12. Edgar H. Schein, Process Consultation: Its Role in Organizational Development, p. 33.
13. Sayles and Strauss, op. cit., p. 321.
14. Guest, op. cit., pp. 41-42.

formal staff meeting to introduce her choice as the new owner. The statements made regarding continuation of the school in its tradition of quality and her own belief in the new manager served to focus staff loyalties on the organization itself rather than on the retiring director and to give a sort of "stamp of approval" to the incoming director. In the other situations, where little or no attention was given to formalizing the introduction of the new manager, the initial period was difficult. While it is difficult to generalize from the example of only one center, one wonders if the transition in the other centers might have been smoother with the addition of some ceremony to help the existing work group members deal with the fact of leader change and mission continuation.

Communication Networks During interviews the directors brought in from the outside to assume their new positions frequently lamented the difficulty of becoming familiar with the center's history, or learning about staff members' "true" feelings, and in feeling they "belonged." The campus director in Situation E relied primarily on the head teacher, who was, in fact, still loyal to the old director, for information about the center and for relaying her requests to staff; neither she nor the staff feel they know each other very well yet. The Director in Situation C made efforts to obtain information from a variety of staff people but would, nonetheless, "all of a sudden find out [i.e., because of staff responses] what the old director did, how she did it differently, . . or [they] often didn't tell me and it wouldn't come out until much later. . ."[15] Of her initial weeks, the Director in Situation A stated, "I was trying to please everyone. . [yet] I felt

15. Director D, Interview, November 1979.

ostracized. I was always on the lookout for feedback as to what the staff was feeling---I didn't think they were being honest ---they were not giving at the meetings."[16]

The experiences of these directors reflect the existence of formal and informal communication networks in an organization. All had access to various formal channels for learning about their new organizations such as meetings with individuals or groups of staff people, formal requests for staff input (e.g., as in Situation D), files of materials to read, and opportunities to meet with their own supervisors about the center.[17] Informal channels of communication occurring through shared rides, classes, community organizations, or other socializing during non-work or even work hours were generally non-existent. Furthermore, several of the directors spent their early days in their offices and did not take breaks with staff members because there was so much to do, further excluding themselves from the informal communication network; for long periods they remained unknown quantities to their employees. Communication, thus, was primarily one-way, downward from director to staff, with no upward communication.[18]

Commenting on a similar situation confronting an industrial plant manager successor, Gouldner observes that the " . . .new manager, therefore,

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16. Director C, Interview, November 1979.

17. The successor in Situation C, in fact, had difficulty even accessing the formal network of her own administrative sponsors, and in Situation E, the director had been told by the college administration that they didn't really want to "be bothered" by the program. Also, with the exception of Situation B, most of the directors interviewed had none, or only limited, time to talk with the outgoing director regarding the program procedures, and staff.

18. Although Gouldner's study emphasizes the tendency for successors who find themselves outside of the informal system to resort to increased use of bureaucratic methods (e.g., formal rules)to "allay anxiety" (their own)and have something "to lean on " (Gouldner, op.cit., p. 96), there was no evidence of this among the child care directors.

found he had no social 'connective tissue,' that is, no informal social relations between himself and the lower echelons."[19] Lacking this "social connective tissue," the manager has great difficulty"in infusing the organization with his goals. . ."[20]

Change Describing the enormous difficulties of entering an existing work group, Phillips and Erikson write:

> . . .a new supervisor will often find himself threatened. . . the group he is to lead has habituated a problem-solving style with which they are comfortable, and they will attempt to defend it against infringements even if it is flagrantly ineffective. .[21]

Much of the literature on organizations speaks of groups as systems in a state of equilibrium ---each member knows what is expected of him by the others (whether supervisor, peer, or subordinate), formal and informal social relationships have been worked out, ways of working on the groups specified task have been developed and are understood by group members, roles have been established, and values and standards of the group (e.g., acceptable length of coffee break, amount of overtime worked, mode of dress, etc.) have been established; in short, the group members are "comfortable" with some typical interactive and "problem-solving" style. The idea of the existing work group as a "system in equilibrium" should not be overlooked by a managerial successor, for as Tannenbaum observes:

> Each individual and each group develops for itself a kind of island of security. This island of security is defined by everything that is important to the individual or to the group. The individual, e.g., gets real security in knowing that he

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19. Gouldner, op.cit., p. 85.
20. Ibid., p. 87.
21. Gerald M. Phillips and Eugene C. Erikson, "Entry Into the Group " in Small Group Communication: A Reader, Robert S. Cathcart and Larry A. Samovar, editors, p. 93.

> can do his job and in knowing where he stands in his relations with other people. When change comes. . .his sense of security is disrupted. . .work groups establish values, ways of doing things, and relationships that provide considerable comfort to their members, . .[22]

The introduction of a new manager into an existing work group is a major change event. Asked "How did you feel when you heard there would be a new director?" staff interviewees expressed fears about job security (this primarily by employees of the private centers), uncertainty about "how this person would handle things,"[23] fear of different philosophies of working with children and resultant changes in the program, sadness at losing the departing director, worries about whether the new director would be someone they could talk to, concerns that there might be personality clashes, and questions about "Will I like to come to work here in the future?" Mos' concerns centered on the individual and how her own relations with her peers, supervisor, and children might be affected. Sayles' and Strauss' comments on change mirror the sentiments expressed by interviewees as they contemplated the arrival of the new director:

> The new way is always strange, threatening, and laden with uncertainties - --even if it is an improvement over the old ...one reason for this fear is the lack of factual information. We know our present circumstances; we don't know what the new ones will be... uncertainties caused by lack of information may be corrected simply by providing answers to questions. . . But there is another kind of uncertainty that cannot be dissipated by providing information: The anxiety that springs from the individual's fears about how <u>he himself</u> will react to the new situation. . .[24]

Although they themselves also had fears and insecurities about their new positions, none of the directors in these case studies attempted to

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22. Robert Tannenbaum, Irving Weschler, and Fred Massarik; <u>Leadership and Organization: A Behavioral Science Approach</u>, p. 82.
23. Staff Interview C2, November 1979.
24. Sayles and Strauss, <u>op.cit.</u>, p. 304.

give their staff members an opportunity to talk about their fears or hopes regarding the change. Thus, the emotionally-charged fact of management succession was simply not confronted and given any formal recognition that such concerns are a natural response to change.

Shortly after their arrival (and in the case of Situation D, simultaneously with), most center directors proposed additional changes (e.g., regular staff meetings, discipline rules, assignment of some additional duties, the institution of activity planning cards, purchases of new equipment, changes in hours of operation, etc.). In some instances, the proposed changes were very general; in others, quite specific. In some instances, fairly detailed explanations of the reasons behind the proposed changes were provided; in others, very little. Despite giving a great deal of thought to the changes before proposing them to staff members, none of the directors gave any thought to how the work group might react to the ideas. In some situations the directors talked about the changes only, while in others, the talk was followed by some sort of action. Many of the suggested changes met with some degree of resistance from workers; some directors were able to implement actual changes and others either postponed or abandoned altogether their hopes for change after meeting resistance.

What accounts for the apparently typical patterns of resistance from the existing group members? Why did some directors initiate change successfully and others fail? Both Lorsch and Thomas view the reactions of staff members in terms of the "psychological contract."[25] Lorsch writes

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25. See Thomas, op.cit., pp. 465-480, and Jay W. Lorsch, "Managing Change" in Organizational Behavior and Administration: Cases and Readings, op. cit., pp. 668-680.

> The way persons respond to an attempt to change their behavior seems to depend on an implicit cost-benefit analysis which they make of the change...if the change he or she is asked to make violates the psychological contract, the individual is apt to drag his or her feet in altering behavior. . .[26]

If, in evaluating the proposed change in relation to his/her own needs, the worker finds that the cost of making the change is more than s/he can (or wants to) give, s/he may then "resist change because he may find it makes life more difficult. . . habits are fixed and learning new ways requires the expenditure of energy. . ."[27]

In making his/her assessment of the "plus-es and minus-es" of the requested behavior change, the staff member may possess ample information about the change and reasons for it, or s/he may have almost no information from the supervisor regarding why the change is needed, or s/he may have inaccurate or distorted information about the change and its impact on him/her. Lacking information about the personal impact of the change, the individual may develop ". . .a short term perspective and lose all sense of involvement in his work. . .;"[28] similar remarks were made by both staff interviewees in Situation E. Responses to requests for change, however, are not generally the result of a rational and analytical thought process but rather of the individual's responses to the fears and insecurities generated by the idea of the change. Most of the resistive behaviors encountered by the new managers were not calculated actions but emotional outbursts and objections to relatively minor requests for change.

Those changes that were based on existing needs of the work group (or those statements that allayed fears of certain changes, e.g., losing a

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26. Lorsch, Ibid., p. 670.
27. Sayles and Strauss, loc. cit.
28. Ibid., pp. 190-191.

job, etc.) were accepted or approved of most readily, for example, the change in job description and in the facility in Situation C and purchasing additional equipment and improving the staff-child ratio (and in effect, lessening the work load) in Situation C. Changes which had not been previously discussed or those in which workers themselves had not participated in identifying the need for the proposed change (e.g., the need for a new lesson plan card, expansion of service to infants and toddlers) seemed either to surprise staff members or make them feel angry and resentful and led them to resist the change. What were termed "grand and glorious ideas" imposed by the new director in Situation D, prompted one staff member to observe, "It was like I haven't any choices in the matter . . I and the others dragged our feet. . ."[29] Worst of all were the changes proposed by incoming directors immediately upon their arrival, for these were viewed as presumptive and demoralizing to the past efforts of the group.

The manner in which changes are proposed also influences the reception given them by staff members. While admitting that "some of the changes are good," one staff member in the infant center stated, "I would be more into accepting things if I hadn't been given the feeling that we'd been wrong [in all that was done since the program began]."[30]

Seeing actual changes such as added equipment or improvement was considered important by many staff interviewees, serving as tangible evidence that the director is effective and "not just a talker." Also, such visible changes carry an important psychological impact for the individuals facing change; in essence, they seem to say, "Change is possible, and I am capable

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29. Staff Interview F2, December 1979.
30. Staff Interview F1, December 1979.

of change."[31]

The literature on change presents two viewpoints regarding the rapidity with which change should be introduced by the new manager. One school views rapid change as most beneficial since the anxiety accompanying change is over with at once; the other views gradual change as "a more humane resolution for the individuals affected."[32] Interviewees in this study, however, preferred gradual changes which allowed them "time to get used to the ideas." Sudden, dramatic changes only exacerbated their feelings of fear, insecurity, and resentment. On the other hand, whether "gradual" means change over a four-week period, four months, or four years, apparently depends on the work group at the individual centers. Each managerial successor must determine that time period and the readiness for change him/herself.

In summary, the following two statement regarding change seem to describe the situations encountered by most of the directors

> The new executive from the outside will take considerable time to understand the values and characteristics of his work group. Until he does, it is impossible for him to do much to change operations.[33]

> There is substantial agreement in the literature to the effect that the leader of a group must have a realistic understanding of the needs of his "followers" in order to change their behavior. He must be "in tune with" the group's needs. Learning about their needs is clearly one of the early phases in successful organizational change under new leadership. Not much is known about the process by which a new leader learns about those needs.[34]

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31. For further discussion of the psychological impact of physical changes, see Guest, op. cit., pp. 110-111, and Guest, Paul Hersey, and Kenneth Blanchard, Organizational Change Through Effective Leadership, p. 88.
32. Lorsch, op. cit., pp. 677-678.
33. Phillips and Erikson, op. cit., p. 93.
34. Guest, op.cit., p. 109.

IV. Recommendations

Based on an analysis of both case studies and theoretical background, a number of recommendations are presented here that should make the managerial succession process in child care centers less disruptive to members of the existing work group.

1. Supervisors of incoming managers should help prepare the existing work group members psychologically for the fact of change by announcing the coming change in directors well-in-advance of the fact.

2. The supervisor and the incoming manager should meet together prior to the manager's actual arrival at the child care center.

   During the meeting,

   a) The new manager should be personally introduced to key people in the organization's administration. (It is also helpful to the new manager to be given a list of names and titles of key people.)

   b) The new manager should be given needed tools for managing his/her center --i.e., job descriptions of all staff members (including his/her own), copies of personnel policies, funding guidelines, etc.

   c) Pertinent information about the organization's history, recent changes in roles or policy, and values and standards from the administration's point-of-view should be provided.

   d) Any problem situations regarding personnel problems should be fully and honestly explained.

   e) The administration and the new manager should share their expectations regarding program, personnel, duties, and other matters explicitly.

3. The fact of change should be formalized in some manner and the successor formally introduced to all of the work group at a special meeting; the introduction should be made by someone in the organization's higher administration.

   a) Ideally, the meeting should take place when children are not present so that staff members can focus full attention on the meeting.

b) The introduction should provide employees with pertinent details of the new director's education and experience in the child care field.

c) The organization's administrator should attempt to focus existing staff members on the organization as a whole, stressing its tradition of care and past achievements and looking forward to future accomplishments. The meeting should set the tone for continued (or future) organizational unity.

d) If the departing director is leaving of his/her own accord, it seems important to have him/her make similar statements as a sort of "passing of the managerial sceptre" to his/her successor.

4. The supervisor of the incoming director must make it clear by attitude and actions that s/he is available to answer questions or discuss staff reactions.

Visits to the site and offers of accessibility are a needed source of support for the new director.

5. If at all possible, the new manager should meet with the outgoing director before assumption of her/his new duties.

The new director needs to obtain as much background information about the center as possible --e.g., why things are handled in certain ways, what rules exist and why, the status of projects in process, where materials are, how the outgoing director viewed (and implemented) her/his role,etc. The new director should also try to obtain the old director's assessment of the group's style and manner of working on problems.

Ideally, the new manager should see the classroom program in the company of the old director, for as one teacher commented, "We wouldn't have to get on our toes yet and it would be less threatening to us."[1]

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1. Hypothetical Interview, Staff Member 01, December 1979.

6. Upon her/his arrival, the new director should hold a meeting(s) with her/his inherited staff immediately to facilitate the "getting to know you" process and deal with staff fears and insecurities.

During the meeting,

a) The director should share additional information about herself/himself ---background, interests, self-appraisal of managerial style, likes/dislikes. Staff members should be encouraged to share similar information about themselves.

The purpose of this sharing is primarily to "de-mystify" the director as an unknown quantity thrust upon the group and to hasten the getting acquainted process which is vital to smooth functioning of the group.

b) Employees should be reassured about their continued employment.

c) There should be opportunities to deal with the emotional content of the director change. The director should share his/her own hopes/fears and encourage staff members to do likewise.

d) Expectations of both the director and the existing staff members regarding role, program how problems should be handled, etc., should be discussed.

Such sharing of expectations should increase both parties' awareness of the basis of the "psychological contract" and prevent its inadvertent violation during the transition period.

e) The new director should take his/her first steps toward establishing two-way communication with staff members. Her/his subordinates should be given explicit permission to agree or disagree with policies, to bring up problems, to propose solutions, etc.

7. During the initial weeks, the new director should take advantage of every opportunity to learn about her/his inherited program and staff, paying special attention to the standards and values of the existing work group and its group process as well as to let staff become better acquainted with her/him.

In order to do this, the new director should be physically present -- on the classroom floor, observing, talking to children and learning their names, and sharing coffee breaks with the staff---rather than securing herself behind an office door.

She must try to learn as much as possible about the existing program and its history ---both by forming her own opinions and by learning of her/his staff's perceptions. She can do this by observing teaching practices, learning and participating in the daily routines, arranging

to be present at different times of day, meeting parents, and by asking questions.

The new manager must take care not to threaten already insecure staff with her/his questions but phrase them carefully in order to gather information and not to evaluate or pass judgment in her/his early days.

The director should attempt to establish a broad communication network by seeking input and information from all staff members at all levels. Her/his goal should be to broaden and not restrict channels during the important transition period. An attempt should be made to ask each individual staff member his/her goals and needs and what s/he hopes to accomplish; the director will thus begin to gain a clearer picture of where staff members "are coming from."

8. The new director should give staff members simple, non-critical but honest feedback about what s/he sees.

When confronted by a new director, staff members wonder and worry about their supervisor's reactions to the program they have put their energies into, they are eager for feedback and want to know "where we stand." Specific, rather than global, statements provide the most information to staff and can aid in rebuilding their "island of security " because they know what the director thinks.

9. When the new director says s/he will do something --whether talking about a specific problem or issue at the next staff meeting, observing a particular classroom routine, or staying late to meet the parents -- s/he must be certain to follow through.

Action must accompany talk, or staff members begin to view the director as "just a talker" and tune her/him out in the future.

10. The new director must recognize that her/his arrival is a major change event and is likely to be highly disruptive to staff. Management succession is traumatic for *both* a new director and the members of the existing staff.

Describing her response to the departure of a director, one teacher observed, "A center is like a family; when someone wants to leave, it's

like a divorce; you feel rejected, and when someone new comes in to replace the departed person, s/he is rejected."[2] The director, then, must prepare herself/himself mentally for the typical reactions to change --challenges to authority, questioning of minor actions and her/his knowledge of child development, testing, verbal or non-verbal signs of disapproval, hostility, occasional withdrawal, etc. S/he must be sensitive to the feelings that underlie such behaviors and confront them sensitively.

11. If at all possible, initial changes should be those based on the needs and concerns of the work group members.

Input should be solicited from staff members regarding ways in which the center might be improved or things that need to be done and their likes and dislikes. Needless to say, the director must sincerely want the input; it should not be requested after s/he has presented her own lists of major changes. Changes are much more likely to occur if they come from the group, for as Sayles and Strauss wryly comment, "Everyone is enthusiastic about implementing his own ideas."[3]

12. Changes should be gradual and should build on the past and what is familiar to the group, what they feel secure with.

Several interviewees mentioned the need for being given credit for what has been done; one teacher, voicing her feelings about change also reinforced the idea of an organization as a balanced system as she reflected, "There must be a gentle breaking in. . if you throw out all that went before, you would throw the whole system out of step."[4]

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2. Staff Interview F2, December 1979.
3. Sayles and Strauss, op. cit., p. 193.
4. Staff Interview F2.

Changes should be proposed in general terms initially to allow individuals time to get used to them but then must be made specific so that each staff member can understand how the change will affect him/her.

13. As the new director contemplates changes, s/he must also assess them in terms of the workers' "psychological contract" with the center and propose change in ways that do not violate or allow renegotiation of the contract.

14. Managerial successors in child care must recognize the fact that his/her acceptance as the new leader of the center will not be immediate but rather takes place only over a period of time.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: DIRECTOR
EXECUTIVE SUCCESSION STUDY

Name _____ Length of time in position_____
# of staff_____

HISTORY Describe the circumstances under which you entered your job, amount of turnover before, length of time the position had been vacant, how hired, to whom responsible.

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF CENTER What did you know about the center before assuming your duties? How did you know this?

What kind of information did your supervisor give you before you took over?

What did you know about the previous director as a person, her style, her reputation?

What did you know about the staff members before you assumed your job?

Did you have ideas of what needed changing before you assumed your duties? If so, how did you form these?

ROLE PERCEPTION How did you see your role as center director?

EXPECTATIONS What were your thoughts as you took over the new job? What were your feelings? What did you think might happen, how would staff view you? Did you have a time table for changes you wanted to take place, detailed plans to implement?

ENTRY INTO THE GROUP How did you enter the group? How were you introduced? By whom? How was the announcement made that there was a new director? The effect on group reactions?

FIRST DAYS IN NEW POSITION Tell me about your first days and weeks as the director. What kinds of things did you say and do? Why? How did the staff learn about you and the type of person you are and your way of doing things? How did they learn of your expectations? Did you hold any meetings?

How did you work with your staff - as individuals, more with one individual, with the group? Why?

How did you get information about the center, the people, the established ways of doing things - i.e., its history?

BEHAVIORS Describe the type of behaviors you encountered, the attitudes(any resistance, differences in acceptance, honeymoon period, challenges to your authority, questioning your knowledge, comments about the previous director and her way of doing things)

Did any of these behaviors or attitudes change YOUR behavior in any way? How/why?

Did anyone resign, did you fire anyone?

What things were of greatest concern to your staff (e.g., wages, working conditions, lesson planning, etc.)?

In general, how much do you have to say about how things are done in the center?

CHANGES Did you try to make any changes? What type, when, how, why? How was the need for these specific changes determined? What happened?

Your biggest challenge during the transition?

ACCEPTANCE Do you feel that you are accepted by the old staff now? How do you know this? How long did it take?

LEARNINGS Looking back, what would you do the same, what would you do differently if you were again to succeed someone as director?

OTHER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: STAFF
EXECUTIVE SUCCESSION STUDY

Name _____ Length of time at center before new director_____
Position_____
How many different directors have you worked under at this center?_____

ROLE PERCEPTION How do you see the role of the director of a center like this?

HISTORY Tell me about the working climate under the former director --her way of doing things, handling problems, communicating, giving feedback on your performance, how the staff worked together and felt.

EXPECTATIONS How were you told there would be a new director?

How did you feel when you heard the news? What did you think about, worry about, hope for?

ENTRY INTO THE GROUP How did you first meet the new director? First impressions? Did you know anything about the new director before she arrived? What did the director say/do during that meeting?

INITIAL PERIOD Tell me about the first weeks and months with the new director--what kinds of things did the director say/do? Why? How did you learn about the new director's expectations of you, the program, etc.? How did you learn about what kind of person the new director is, ways of doing things, etc.?

What effect did any of those actions/words have on you/the staff?

How did the new director tend to work - with individuals, with the group as a whole?

Were any changes announced/made? What, why, how? Your thoughts/responses?

Tell me about your behavior/other staff members' behavior during the initial period ---what did you do/say? Was there testing of knowledge on child development? Seeing how far rules could be bent? Challenging of orders? Verbal comments?

Did anything the director said or did make YOU change your behavior in any way?

PERCEPTIONS OF THE NEW DIRECTOR Tell me about the kind of person the new director is - how are decisions made? How does she communicate? How do you know how you're doing? How is she at enforcing rules?

If you're upset about something or want a change, would you go to the new director? Why?

PERCEIVED CHANGES Have you noted any changes since the new director arrived - in staff relations, climate, relations with your peers, parents, director? Changes in physical environment? Are they important? How did they occur? Who decided the changes were needed?

Are there changes you'd like to see?

SUGGESTIONS/OBSERVATIONS Looking back, what would you suggest are good things for a new director to do when she comes into a center after someone else? What are things that aren't good to do? What would you do?

APPENDIX C

EXECUTIVE SUCCESSION
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: HYPOTHETICAL

Name _____
Center _____

What would concern/worry you most about the prospect of this center having a new director?

How would this center operate if the changeover in directors went perfectly?

What kinds of things would happen if everything went wrong?

If you were the new director, what things would you say and do right at the beginning to ensure a positive feeling during the transition?

APPENDIX D

One person's view of "executive succession"

"...are apt to look upward when they take over a manager's job, intent on proving themselves to superviors. In corporate gamesmanship terms this is known as losing sight of the ball. You can't be looking toward the coach and keep track of the action on the field. In other words, your immediate concern is the action going on with your teammates, your new subordiates. As a supervisor, you are the one calling the shots because the coach has delegated some of his authority to you. Before all else, you must size up the other players and figure out the logistics of the play in progress. The worst play possible is throwing the ball wildly without seeing that someone is there to receive it.

My friend Sharon is one of the most proficient players I know... 'The first thing I do --real quick--is find out if someone who is my subordinate wanted the job I got. That person is going to hate you and can easily destroy an outsider. It's a very delicate situation, but I take him to lunch within the first six weeks. At the beginning I have casual conversations with everybody, trying to find where the bodies are buried. I'm very non-commital, leaving a wide-open field for others to make their little moves. I let people bully me--just to find out who they are. I leave plenty of loop-holes to identify the mean or pernicious characters. For instance, I'll give an instruction verbally rather than in written form and pretend not to follow up --just to see if the person remembers it accurately or twists it around to distort my intention, or decides not to follow my order at all.

I absorb all the personality information coming my way like a sponge, soaking up office gossip, listening to 'helpful' comments by and about various individuals, reading all memos and notes flowing to my office from colleagues and subordinates. You have to get the lay of the land, take the measure of the people you're working with. I try to figure out who is allied with whom, who I can probably trust and who probably can't be trusted. Eventually you're going to have to make friends, but not before you've sized up the situation.

As a manager, the next thing to do is find out how they all work together. Long before you ever set foot in the place, certain norms and customs were established by those already there. How do they address each other? Is everyone on a first name basis or are there distinctions? Is it the kind of place where the listing of names on a routing slip has enormous significance? How are the memos circulated--to everyone or just to those who need to see them? How do the working hour patterns shape up? Is everyone prompt or do they just dribble in late? ....

I try to look into their system and find out these little things without rocking the boat too much, in case I have to rock it later with major changes like restructuring. If you get people uptight on silly things, you'll never get done what you have to do because they can easily band together against a new supervisor and obstruct you at every turn. There are lots of little quirks in every company...that may seem inconsequential or ridiculous to you, but I found out they can have the most influence on your ability to manage the department so I spend the first couple of weeks trying to find out what they are.' "

excerpt Games Mother Never Taught You: Corporate Gamesmanship for Women pp.312-314.

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